VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

**Division of Technology, Career, and
Adult Education
Office of Adult Education and Literacy**

**Annual Performance Report
to the U. S. Department of Education**

July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
DIVISION OF
**TECHNOLOGY, CAREER &
ADULT EDUCATION**
OFFICE OF ADULT EDUCATION & LITERACY SERVICES

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The Commonwealth of Virginia, through its Department of Education, provides leadership and oversight to Adult Basic Education (ABE), English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), and Adult Secondary Education (ASE) programs for adults who do not hold a high school credential or who seek English language instruction. The Office of Adult Education and Literacy (OAEL) is responsible for managing federal and state funds allocated for these programs. Although the *Code of Virginia* places the responsibility for the provision of adult education services with Virginia's 132 local school divisions, a spectrum of services is delivered through partnerships with public and community-based providers that include local school boards, community colleges, nonprofit and faith-based organizations, state institutions and agencies, employers, and state, local, and regional correctional facilities.

OAEL supports service providers through a centralized resource center for adult educators and professionals, a distance learning center, regularly scheduled regional and statewide meetings and webinars, and regional literacy committees that organize activities throughout Virginia. Fiscal Year 2009-2010 saw continued OAEL support related to high-quality professional development and technical assistance for adult educators in Virginia. The OAEL also worked closely with the Governor's Task Force on Career Pathways System Development, which resulted in an expansion of partnerships, transitional supports, and program services for advancing low-skilled adults into postsecondary education and employment. EL/Civics programs have also achieved many successes, as indicated through the highlighted activities.

The FY 2009-2010 data indicate that progress is being made to meet the goals cooperatively established by the U. S. Department of Education and the Virginia Department of Education. However, programs in Virginia continued to be impacted by the economic downturn and related job losses and local budget shortfalls. The response to Virginia's Race to GED initiative was still significant, but many responders continued to require ABE-level instruction and were not ready for Fast Track or GED preparation classes. Outreach across the state continued to be addressed as target populations were recruited and assessed. Although the high percentage of part-time staff continues to present a challenge to programs in Virginia, the continued implementation of the certification program for adult educators in the Commonwealth resulted in greater numbers of educators participating in professional development activities.

During 2009-2010, the OAEL continued implementation of its revised and revamped monitoring and evaluation plan, resulting in strengthened technical assistance and regional support. This included issuance of program performance report cards to all programs, follow-up monitoring site visits, and expanded focus on technical assistance and guidance to local programs in advance of, and subsequent to, monitoring visits. Program feedback that was received informed further development of the technical support and continued improvement of the process.

The following pages describe progress made in reaching programmatic goals established for grantees who are awarded federal and state resources to deliver adult education services. The report is divided into the following four major sections: (1) State Leadership; (2) Effectiveness of Adult Education and Literacy Activities; (3) Integration of Activities; and (4) EL/Civics Activities and Services.

OAEL employed leadership funds to provide opportunities throughout the state for professional development, technological advances, and technical assistance.

Professional Development
Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center (VALRC)
During 2009-2010, VALRC conducted 1,000 hours of training for 3,472 participants. This number represents a 69 percent increase in hours of training and a 35 percent increase in the number of participants from the 2008-2009 totals. This large increase was a result of the broader implementation of the Virginia Adult Education Certification Program (VAECP), in which nearly 1,000 program managers, ABE/GED teachers, and ESOL teachers have participated since November 2008. VALRC staff developed VAECP training curricula for two program manager sessions, three ABE/GED instructor sessions, and three ESOL instructor sessions, as well as the train-the-trainer workshops and the first session of the support staff strand for fall 2010.

In addition to VAECP sessions, VALRC continued to provide training, both face-to-face and online, in content areas, learning disabilities, assessment, content standards, goal setting, ESOL and GED instruction, technology integration, and other topics. VALRC coordinated the statewide Program Managers Meeting, which had 71 participants, and assisted with several other OAEL meetings. The VALC staff also worked with OAEL to revise training in goal setting and assessment, as well as incorporate content standards into workshops and VAECP sessions.

During 2009-2010, VALRC also focused on providing targeted, new training and resources to adult educators in Virginia. Highlights of new professional development resources made available during the past year are noted below.

- VALRC offered several new online courses, including Lesson Planning for the ABE/GED Classroom, Beyond Basics: The Multilevel ESOL Classroom, and Developing Writing Skills in Adults.
- VALRC developed and conducted a visual, or graphics, literacy workshop and plans to continue to conduct additional sessions in the upcoming year.
- The Resource Center used WIMBA to conduct a train-the-trainer workshop for ABE/GED Level II certification, Sessions 1 and 2.

VALRC also published three issues of the statewide newsletter *Progress*; maintained the GED Helpline; and provided resources, information, and technical assistance to the field through in-person and telephone support, as well as Web sites and listservs.

Radford University (RU)
During 2009-2010, RU supported OAEL through the organization of regional trainings and conferences, as well as professional development initiatives. RU organized and supported the New Program Managers Meeting, which provided support to 26 new program managers and mentors. In addition, RU worked to coordinate the Virginia Institute for Lifelong Learning (VAILL) in Southwest and Northern Virginia, where 375 adult educators participated in the VAECP sessions. These sessions included Level 1 Sessions for ABE/GED instructors and program managers, as well as Level 1 Sessions for ESOL instructors. Staff at Radford also assisted OAEL with monitoring and evaluation activities, as well as a variety of research projects related to career pathways and integrated education and training.

Technology and Technical Assistance
Electronic Registrar Online (ERO)
During 2009-2010, Virginia selected the Electronic Registrar Online (ERO) as the new online learning management system (LMS), after the previous LMS proved to be unsatisfactory for the professional development delivery and data management needs identified by OAEL. ERO is currently being used by all state-funded adult education and literacy programs to register and access meetings and training opportunities conducted by either VALRC or OAEL, to maintain records of VAECP participation, and as a resource that provides reports to adult educators, program managers, VALRC, and OAEL. ERO will also provide access to a calendar listing of all training programs, courses, and conferences. The adoption of this new system is expected to greatly improve the efficiency of professional development registration and the maintenance of data records used in the reporting processes of both VALRC and OAEL. More thorough tracking of program participation in professional development will allow OAEL to more accurately track and reflect such activities in desk audits and the program report cards.

eLearnVA
OAEL continues to develop a distance learning center, administered by VALRC. The center maintains the eLearnVA Web portal (www.elearnva.org). Using this portal, learners may access a variety of well-known ABE/GED-preparation products via streaming videos, as well as online mentors who correspond with learners and provide instructional support. In addition to the central Web portal, eLearnVA also maintains a toll-free hotline for students, mentors, and teachers, which received over 4,300 phone calls during 2009-2010.

eLearnVA met and surpassed the targeted goal of supporting 250 students from program referrals during 2009-2010, with 266 students formally enrolling in the system from July 1, 2009, to June 30th, 2010. This enrollment number represents a slight increase over the enrollment from 2008-2009. Sixty-nine additional learners were enrolled prior to July 1, 2009, but continued to receive services during fiscal year 2009-2010. Another notable achievement of the eLearnVA program is the number of students who earned a GED credential. During 2009-2010, approximately 18 percent of students who received services in the eLearn program earned a GED credential. Of the 61 GED credentials earned by participants in the eLearnVA program in 2009-2010, 42 of these credentials were obtained by first-year learners and 19 were obtained by second- or third-year learners. During the three-year program, approximately 25 percent of all eLearnVA participants accomplished their goal of passing the GED tests.

PlugGEDInVA
In 2009-2010, OAEL worked to increase learner access to PlugGEDInVA, an integrated education and training program that provides GED preparation, community college credits, and incorporates instruction of technology and industry-specific skills. The initiative grew to a total of 4 sites in Southwest Virginia, and added a new curriculum focused on the weatherization field. Specially trained instructors provided learners with comprehensive GED instruction through project-based learning implemented with the support of professional mentors. Through the program's partnerships with business and the community college system, learners were prepared to obtain their GED credential and earn college credits, as well as create technology portfolios, develop industry sector skills, receive Career Readiness Certificates, and collect valuable professional contacts.

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EFFECTIVENESS OF ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES

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NRS Highlights
During 2009-2010, OAEL continued to build upon the 2007 release of two significant policies, the *Assessment Policy for Virginia Adult Education and Literacy Programs* and the *Goal-Setting Policy for Virginia Adult Education and Literacy Programs*. These two documents, along with the standardized

intake and student learning plan form, the Universal Student Profile Document (USPD), have been the impetus for significant shifts in the practices and procedures of Virginia's adult education programs. They have had major impact upon the delivery of services and data reporting in the Commonwealth. OAEL continued to provide policy-related support to the field through in-person trainings, regional workshops, and regular technical assistance via telephone and e-mail. The total enrollment, attendance averages, and educational gains continued to be impacted by the implementation and adjustments to the policies and state targets. The 2009-2010 NRS tables reflect the effects of these changes on performance.
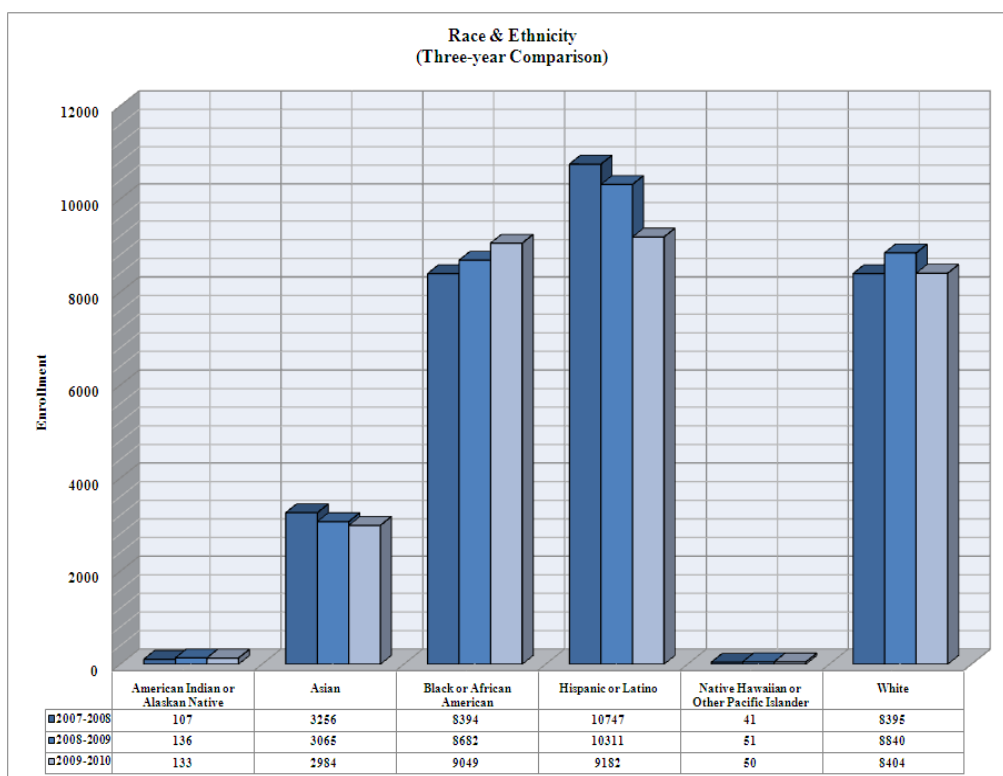
Staffing
Virginia's local adult education programs are largely supported by staff employed on a part-time or volunteer basis. In 2009-2010, approximately 96 percent of all staff were either part-time or volunteer. Four percent of all staff served in an administrative capacity, with the majority of administrative staff functioning on a part-time or voluntary basis. In many instances, local programs experienced significant turnover, which resulted in an increased need for staff development and training activities. Additionally, many programs lacked a qualified pool of applicants for adult education positions.

Participants
Virginia experienced a decrease in enrollment during 2009-2010. Enrollment totaled 29,802 individuals, representing a decrease of 1,283 learners from the previous year. The three largest ethnic groups participating in programs included, in order: Hispanic or Latino (9,182), Black or African American (9,049), and White (8,404). Since 2004-2005, individuals who have identified their ethnicity as Hispanic or Latino have outnumbered all other ethnic groups (See Figure 1). Virginia continued to serve more individuals in the 25-44 age group (14,905) than any other age group. The 19-24 age group (6,782) was the second largest. In 2009-2010, fifty-six percent of participants, or 16,805, were females, while 44 percent, or 12,997, were males.

Figure 1

	American Indian or Alaskan Native	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	White
2007-2008	107	3256	8394	10747	41	8395
2008-2009	136	3065	8682	10311	51	8840
2009-2010	133	2984	9049	9182	50	8404

English as a Second Language (ESL)
A total of 12,658 learners were reported across the six ESL levels. In 2009-2010, the total number of ESL learners served in Virginia (12,658) outnumbered the total number of both ABE (12,512) and ASE learners (4,632). The largest group reported was at ESL Intermediate Low, with 2,436 or 19 percent. ESL learners averaged 78 hours of attendance as compared to an average of 76 hours in 2008-2009. ESL Beginning Literacy learners attended the lowest average number of hours (64), while ESL Advanced learners attended the highest average number of hours (89). Of the total ESL learners served, approximately 42 percent, or 5,370, made EFL gains. Virginia programs report administering the CASAS and BEST Plus 86 percent of the time. The targets for three of the six EFLs were met.

ESL learner enrollment continued to decrease for the third consecutive year. Transience, family demands, and the political climate are among the potential causes for the downward enrollment trends. Virginia continues to provide training for ESL practitioners in curriculum and assessment, with the goal of increasing retention and supporting ESL learners' instructional needs. The VALRC began the development of an ESL strategic plan for rural and emerging programs that will be completed in 2011.

Adult Basic Education (ABE)
ABE learners comprise the second largest population served by Virginia programs. A total of 12,512 learners were reported across the four ABE EFLs. The largest EFL served was ABE Intermediate High. ABE learners attended classes for an average of 64 hours in 2009-2010, compared to 63 hours in 2008-2009. Of the total ABE learners served, 42 percent, or 5,269, made EFL gains.

In Virginia, the TABE represents 99 percent of all ABE/ASE assessments administered. Virginia may attribute the increase in ABE High Intermediate learners to the Race to GED's emphasis on outreach, recruitment, Fast Track, and GED preparation for higher-level learners. Additionally, an increased focus on postsecondary transitioning may have influenced the growth of enrollments in this area. This may also explain why the target was not met, because 51 percent of learners at this level were not post-tested. Many chose to take the GED Tests before completing a post-test.

Adult Secondary Education (ASE)
A total of 4,632 learners were reported across the two ASE levels. On average, ASE learners attended classes 43 hours, representing a slight increase from 2008-2009. Of the total ASE learners served, 52 percent, or 2,386, made EFL gains.

With improved assessment practices and a greater focus on scale scores in math and reading for instructional purposes, a significant number of learners were placed in the ASE levels. Many of the learners at the ASE levels participated in Fast Track and GED Prep, successfully obtaining their GEDs. In total, 3,997 NRS-reportable learners were reported as earning a GED certificate, representing a decrease from 2008-2009. Additional learners reported at the ASE levels found success in the National External Diploma Program (EDP) or Adult High School Diploma program. Local programs reported 144 learners completing the EDP and 94 adults completing a high school diploma.

The ASE levels pose challenges to programs in the Commonwealth. Many local programs have encountered barriers related to high unemployment, factory closings, or lack of industry altogether. These factors appear to have resulted in many learners who could benefit from services being discouraged by the lack available jobs. The workforce development activities highlighted in section three are designed to improve these results and streamline access to services and employment opportunities.

Follow-up Measures
Follow-up measures continue as an important component of all programs. Participant status and exit from programs often dictate the number of learners available for follow-up. In Virginia's programs, 44

percent of all learners indicated an employed status when entering, a decrease of 6 percent from 2008-2009. Approximately 32 percent of learners entered "unemployed not in the labor-force," yet only 6 percent all learners are on public assistance. Learners identifying themselves as "unemployed and in the labor force" comprised approximately 24 percent. Learners in institutional programs, such as corrections, were approximately 8 percent of the learner population, a slight decrease from 2008-2009. In addition, approximately 30 percent of Virginia's learners live in a rural area of the Commonwealth, consistent with 2008-2009. Most rural areas lack public transportation or other services, often found in more urban programs, to provide increased access to adult education programs.

Virginia measures its follow-up performance through a data matching process. Three databases are used to complete the match: (1) the Virginia Employment Commission for entering and retaining employment goals; (2) the National Student Clearinghouse for the postsecondary education and training goal; and (3) NRSPro.com for the receipt of secondary credential goals (GED).

The Commonwealth met three of the four follow-up goals – *retained employment, obtained a GED, and entered postsecondary education or training* – with performances of 73, 100, and 46 percent, respectively. The enter employment goal target was 62 percent, but Virginia achieved a 56 percent outcome. This is likely due to the reduction in hiring that has been one of the unfortunate effects of the current economic situation. Figure 2 provides an overview of follow-up goal performance.

Figure 2
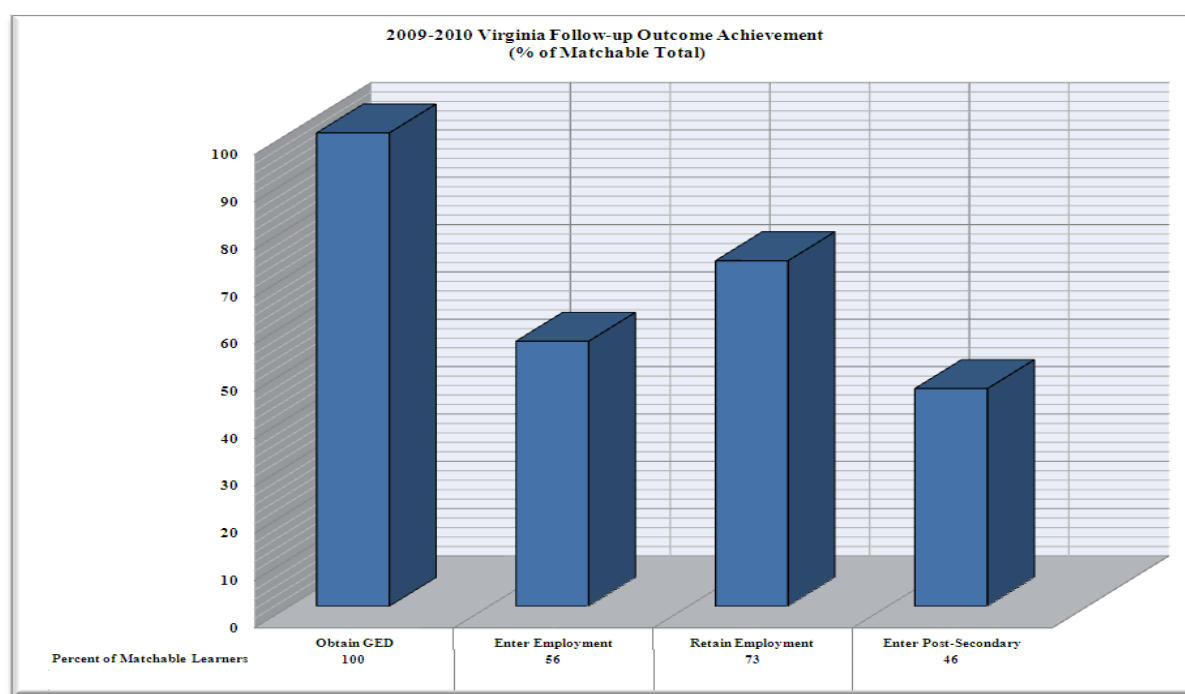
GED Testing Services
The Virginia GED testing program provides adults who lack a high school diploma with the opportunity to earn a high school equivalency certificate. Like many states, Virginia has a high number of working-age adults without a high school credential. In 2009-2010, there were 80 official GED testing centers and more than 290 addendum sites strategically located throughout the Commonwealth.

Monitoring and Evaluation
In 2009-2010, OAEL made a number of enhancements to the comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system that was implemented in FY 2007-2008. In November 2009, OAEL distributed an annual program performance report card to each local adult education program that received OAEL funding. The report card provides the program with a snapshot of its performance in terms of financial management, target performance, and policy compliance. Each of these three areas is based on measures that identify particular strengths and weaknesses within each area. OAEL also used the report card to develop a system to determine site visit eligibility.

During 2009-2010, OAEL conducted follow-up visits to the five programs that were initially visited the year before. Of the five, three programs demonstrated compliance with all of the site visit criteria while the remaining two made significant strides towards full compliance. In addition, OAEL conducted new site visits at eleven programs. During the visits, the site visit team evaluated programs in the areas of student and grant record-keeping, delivery of services, budget and finance, recruitment and retention efforts, technology, staff preparation, and required each program to conduct a data demonstration. As part of the site visit process, OAEL provided each program with a corrective action summary and recommendations for addressing each corrective action item. Unlike previous site visits, in 2009-2010 OAEL implemented a new program for providing site visit guidance and support. The new program includes the training of regional specialists to serve as a site visit resource for program managers within specific geographic regions in preparation for site visits as well as directly work with programs in corrective action to expedite them through the process.

INTEGRATION OF ACTIVITIES

Integration and Partnerships
Federal Policy2Performance Project (P2P)
Virginia was selected to participate in a targeted technical assistance initiative, aimed at advancing the designated support of services for advancing low-skilled adults into postsecondary education and employment. During 2009-2010, OAEL focused attention on building a team of workforce partners who will focus on enhancing policies, comprehensive supports, and networking opportunities to increase access of low-skilled adults to training and learning opportunities. A strategic plan was created to increase the number of partners from public and private sectors to support the Virginia Career Pathways System and to align instructional and assessment models with the postsecondary education and training implementation with respect to regional employer needs. A pilot project based on the PlugGEDInVA model was developed and will be implemented and evaluated in 2010-2011

The Governor's Task Force on Career Pathways System Development
OAEL continued to work with other members of the Governor's Task Force on Career Pathways System Development to build the Commonwealth's career pathways system. In 2008, Virginia's governor and agency heads released a comprehensive career pathways system strategic plan – *Bridging Business and Education for the 21st Century Workforce: A Strategic Plan for Virginia's Career Pathways System.* In 2009-2010, OAEL began targeted work to address some of the goals outlined in the strategic plan, as evidenced through the development and/or expansion of the Adult Education Transitional Specialists, regional Ford Foundation Grant planning, and PluggedInVA. OAEL was also active in the strategic planning of the National Governors' Association-supported Forum on Postsecondary Credential Attainment by Adult Workers. Ongoing work, including OAEL presentations to various boards and stakeholders, meetings with private foundations interested in enhancing career pathways roles, and regular communication with the Governor's Chief Workforce Advisor expand awareness of the plan and the system partners.

<u>Virginia Workforce Council's Workforce Services Committee</u>
In 2009-2010, OAEL continued to work closely with the Governor's Office for Workforce Development and the Workforce Services Committee of the Virginia Workforce Council. Regular meetings of the committee focused on implementation at the local level, staff training, building better relationships between partner agencies, and streamlining service delivery. OAEL's participation was also crucial in supporting the continued development of Virginia's career pathways system.

As a result of OAEL's close relationship with the Workforce Services Committee, the committee again supported and coordinated plans for a statewide GED Week to raise awareness and increase recruitment into adult education classes. This year those plans included the commitment of funding by the Virginia Workforce Council to support activities.

<u>Communities for Opportunity (CFO)</u>
The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development and OAEL jointly selected grants to be funded with CFO funds. The CFO initiative stimulated community development through workplace literacy under the Race to GED initiative. CFO funds assisted Virginia workers in improving basic workplace skills for job placement, stability, retention, and advancement. In 2009-2010, approximately $125,000 of CFO pass-through funding was provided to recipients, including Eastern Shore and Southside Virginia Community College, Regional Adult Education of Lee, Scott, Norton, and Wise, Southwest Regional Adult Education Program, and West Piedmont Regional Adult Education.

WIB and One Stop Representation
No staff member from OAEL sits on the Virginia Workforce Council; rather, the Secretary of Education holds a seat. Representation at the local level, however, is pervasive. There are 15 local WIBs in Virginia. Within one-stop centers of each workforce investment board, adult education programs may provide referrals, collocate services, or provide a combination of both.

Funds Used to Support One-Stop System Activities and Services
For 2009-2010, local programs reported that approximately $324,139 in cash and $188,721 in in-kind support was contributed to activities and services provided at the one-stop centers throughout the Commonwealth. This is an increase of almost $120,000 from 2008-2009, which reflects the continued emphasis on the one-stop system in Virginia by the Governor and WIA partners. The majority of the funds were used to support salaries and benefits followed by materials and supplies. Listed below are the types of activities and services provided by local programs.

- ABE/GED instruction
- In-service presentations for one-stop employees
- Career and job fair participation
- Continuous quality improvement training
- TABE training for one-stop staff
- Rapid response team participation

- Shared recruitment and referrals to and from one-stop partners
- WorkKeys assessment and KeyTrain training
- One-stop office staffing
- Internet job listing
- ESOL classes for one-stop partners

ENGLISH LITERACY (EL)/CIVICS EDUCATION ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

Overview
In 2009-2010, Virginia issued EL/Civics grant awards to 16 programs. The competitive grants were awarded to address priorities such as meeting NRS accountability targets, incorporating civics education

into ESOL classes, providing citizenship preparation, and increasing access to EL/Civics services. The programs reflect a broad geographic distribution and multiple organizational types, including public school divisions, regional programs, and community-based literacy organizations.

Statewide Activity
EL/Civics grantee performance continues to improve. In 2009-2010, 16 EL/Civics grantees served 11,479 adult learners, a 13 percent increase from the 10,149 learners served in 2008-2009 and a 25 percent jump over the 9,183 adults served in 2007-2008. During this same period, program efficiency also improved. Although NRS-based enrollments declined three percent from a high of 3,701 in 2007-2008 to this year's total of 3,577, the number of learners making an educational gain jumped from 1,242 in 2007-2008 to 1,533 in 2009-2010, an increase of 23 percent. As a result, 43 percent of EL/Civics learners achieved an educational gain this year compared with just 34 percent two years ago. Improved program efficiency has led to greater program success for meeting the NRS accountability targets. In 2007-2008, only three programs met at least 70 percent of their educational functioning level (EFL) targets. Two years later, this number jumped to six. At the same time, the number of programs meeting 25 percent of their EFL targets or less declined from six to two.

In terms of participant age, the largest group of learners was adults 25-44 years old (62 percent), followed by adults 45-59 (18 percent) and adults 19-24 (15 percent). These numbers are similar to previous year's numbers. In terms of ethnicity, the largest group was Hispanic/Latino adults (53 percent), followed by Asian adults (23 percent) and white adults (16 percent). Here, the data suggest a couple of interesting trends. Since 2007-2008, the percentage of Hispanic/Latino participation dropped from 66 to 53 percent while the percentage of Asian participation increased from 18 to 23 percent, and participation by white adults increased from 10 percent to 16 percent. With respect to citizenship preparation, programs reported 286 adults setting the goal of obtaining citizenship and 128 as having met the goal.

Local Program Activity
Brief descriptions of local program activities across four regions are provided below.

Eastern Shore
Eastern Shore Literacy Council (Community-based Literacy Organization)
This was the first year that the Eastern Shore Literacy Council (ESLC) received an EL/Civics grant. The funding allowed ESLC to increase the number of trained ESOL instructors, increase the recruitment of adult learners by 15 percent, integrate civics education into the ESOL curriculum, and provide staff with appropriate professional development activities.

Tidewater
Virginia Beach City Public Schools (Public School Division)
Virginia Beach City Public Schools used its EL/Civics grant to expand instructional opportunities and reduce its waiting list numbers, strengthen EL/Civics education throughout its ESOL program, and implement a program to enable learners functioning at the lowest level (pre-literacy) to transition to NRS-level instruction. Reported enrollment was more than double the proposed target; yet Virginia Beach was able to eliminate its waiting list and at the same time meet all of the NRS accountability targets.

Central Virginia
Spotsylvania County Public Schools (Regional Program)
The Spotsylvania County regional program, which includes Spotsylvania County Public Schools, Caroline County Public Schools, King George County Public Schools, Fredericksburg City Public Schools, and Stafford County Public Schools used EL/Civics funding to provide intensive English to a select group of adults who wanted to improve their education, job skills, and technology usage. By

integrating civics-related topics into the ESOL curriculum, students learned a great deal about different aspects of their community. In addition, each student used a computer regularly during class.

Shenandoah Valley
<u>Charlottesville City Public Schools (Public School Division)</u>
Charlottesville City Public Schools used its EL/Civics funding to increase access for underserved groups by offering classes focused on beginning literacy, blending distance learning with traditional classroom-based instruction, and providing workplace programs for limited English proficient adults. EL/Civics classes included civics-related elements that focused on U.S. history and government, citizenship and naturalization, and civic participation. In addition, Charlottesville used its funding to implement a program improvement process that allowed staff to evaluate program and classroom-level performance on a regular basis, identify program priorities, and monitor the assessment process.